

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 1 July 2015

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Professor Ainley	Professor Hall
Professor Andrew	Professor Hughes
Dr Aissaoui	Professor Ketley
Mr Athwal	Dr Lewis
Professor Atkinson	Professor Lilley
Professor Barstow	Dr Macleod
Professor Beck	Dr Marsh
Professor Challiss	Professor Marshall
Professor Chapman	Dr Norman
Professor Coleman	Professor Peel
Professor Davidchack	Professor Raven
Professor Du Bois	Professor Samani
Professor England	Professor Schwabe
Professor Foxhall	Dr Shaw
Professor Fry	Ms Taylor
Dr Garner (<i>vice Professor Phythian</i>)	Professor Thomas (<i>vice Professor Heckel</i>)
Dr George (<i>vice Professor Pritchard</i>)	Professor Wood
Dr Gibson	Professor Yeoman
Professor Goodhall	

In attendance: Professor Phoenix, Director of Finance, Registrar and Secretary, Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for Absence were received from Mrs Bailey, Dr Barber, Professor Hainsworth, Professor Heckel, Professor Lawson, Professor Lunt, Dr Maltby, Professor Phythian, Professor Pritchard, Professor Thompson and Professor Wallace

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

15/M17 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Senate considered the minutes of the meetings that had taken place on 11 March and 6 May 2015.

Senate **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

15/M18 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M13 c) and M14 Senate noted that the changes to the Senior Management Team and the academic restructuring of the University approved at the meeting of Senate on 6 May required corresponding amendments to Ordinances 6, 10 and 18 of the University. Senate noted that Council had given preliminary approval to the

amendments, however before this could be finalised Senate had the opportunity to make comments on the proposed amendments for consideration by Council.

Senate noted that the proposals reflected the amendments to the Senior Management Team including the creation of the role of Provost, and the selection processes for Pro-Vice-Chancellors. The amendments also clarified the role of Senate to determine the academic structure of the University.

Senate endorsed the revisions to Ordinances for final approval by Council.

15/M19 PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

(a) League tables

Senate received a report on the University's position in recently published league tables. Senate noted that the University had fallen to 24th in the Complete University Guide (from 19th) and had fallen to 32nd in the Guardian (from 21st). Senate noted that the results were disappointing, however there were a range of projects underway to improve the University's performance in the key metrics such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) outcomes used within the league table calculations.

In particular, Senate noted that a detailed analysis of recent NSS outcomes was leading to development of action plans for how to improve the University's performance in this regard.

(b) Tuition Fees

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that following the outcome of the General Election and the resolution of a number of uncertainties regarding future tuition fee levels, Universities UK (UUK) would be proposing that the maximum fee should be permitted to rise beyond £9,000 in line with inflation, for all institutions and subject areas.

(c) Funding for Higher Education

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that under plans developed by the Conservative government the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills would be required to deliver further savings, and that this would likely result in a reduction of the funding available for Higher Education through HEFCE. The details of proposed reductions were not yet known.

(d) Student Recruitment

The President and Vice-Chancellor noted that one means of mitigating the risk associated with a potential reduction in government funding for HE was to maximise student recruitment for the coming academic year. Senate recognised the work underway in academic departments and the Professional Services to support student recruitment, thanked colleagues for their work to date and encouraged all academic departments to make every effort to further maximise recruitment for 2015/16.

(e) National Space Campus

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that the University was in the early stages of discussion with the City of Leicester to potentially establish a new campus on the

National Space Centre site. This would involve the relocation of the University's space and earth observation activities to the new campus and would provide an opportunity for the University to engage with business and with enterprise partnerships to build upon its academic strength in these areas.

(f) Senior Management Team

Senate noted that Professor Peel had been appointed to the post of Provost, commencing on 1 August 2015, and congratulated him on his appointment. An internal recruitment process for the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) was underway.

Senate also noted that Professor Coleman had been appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the new College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities from 1 August 2015. Senate congratulated her on her appointment.

15/M20

STRATEGY AND POLICY

(a) Draft University Strategic Plan

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented the draft University Strategy. The Strategy had been developed on the basis of extensive consultation through the Strategic Conversation and the President and Vice-Chancellor thanked colleagues throughout the institution for their valuable input into the process. The document had sought to capture the tenor of the Strategic Conversation in order to articulate a bold, innovative and forwards looking strategy for the institution.

Senate noted that the Strategy was intended to be a dynamic document that spoke to both internal and external audiences. Senate also noted that there were a number of actions and goals set for the next two academic years, however the Plan in itself was not time limited, in order to allow a level of flexibility for future development.

Senate noted that the Strategic Plan focussed on the theme of 'discovery' and ensuring that this was central to the four key themes of research, learning, infrastructure and culture. Senate noted that there had been detailed consideration of the term 'elite' within the context of the University. The document sought to demonstrate that the University was elite, however to define this in a manner that set the institution apart from its local and national competitors. Senate noted that it may be helpful to demonstrate the University's commitment to the expansion of its international partnerships by enhancing this element of the Strategy. Senate also noted and welcomed the inclusion within the Strategy of specific reference to the University's role within the community and the city through the PROUD initiative.

Senate welcomed the development of the Strategy and noted that there would be the opportunity for members to make further comments directly to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) for consideration within the final draft.

Senate **endorsed** the draft Strategic Plan for consideration by Council. Senate noted that the final approved strategy would be supported by a range of underpinning implementation plans, and that the final Strategy would be launched in September 2015, alongside a re-branding of the University's website and external presence.

(b) Budget for 2015/16 and Financial Forecasts to 2018/19

Senate considered the budget for 2015/16 and the Financial Forecasts to 2018/19. Representatives of the Campus Trade Unions were invited to attend for this item. The Director of Finance drew Senate's attention to particular aspects of the budget and forecasts.

Senate noted that the University's income in 2014/15 had been £295 million which generated a surplus of £6.1 million or 2% of income. Senate noted that under the forecasts income was projected to grow to £348 million by the end of the planning period, in large part due to a proposed expansion of student numbers of 12% by 2019/20.

Senate noted that the Financial Forecasts had been developed alongside the Strategic Plan and the priorities identified aligned directly with those in the Plan around discovery led research and learning, and discovery enabling culture and infrastructure. In particular Senate noted that investment in the University's infrastructure would be significantly increased in the short term in order to address the priorities outlined above. Senate noted that this would result in lower proposed surpluses over the period, however following this foundation phase the University would move into growth and capitalisation phases in which it would begin to benefit from the return on investments made. Senate also noted proposals for a reassessment of the University's assets through the sale of a number of properties and the potential redevelopment of the Freeman's Common site.

Senate noted that the key financial principles underpinning the financial planning going forwards would be:

- Ongoing capital investment
- Sustainable income level per staff member
- Efficient Corporate Services
- Profitable trading activities
- Comfortable on all loan covenants
- Sustainable level of borrowing

Senate noted the uncertainties in the near future including the potential funding reduction referenced above, the challenging recruitment market at both undergraduate and taught postgraduate level and the potential for a successful claim under the research and development tax credit scheme.

Senate thanked the Director of Finance and his team for the production of the forecasts and **endorsed** the budget and forecasts for submission to Council.

(c) Revisions to the University Committee Structure

The Registrar and Secretary presented a paper which proposed a series of amendments to the committees of Senate and Council. The proposals had been developed on the basis of feedback from Senate, Council, ULT and other stakeholders, and within the wider context of the potential changes to the national framework for quality assurance.

The paper proposed a series of minor amendments to the committees of Senate, in order to formally incorporate a role in the management of performance in their particular area. This would include a review of the terms of reference of each

committee in order to reflect the performance aspect element of their role. It was also proposed to establish a new Committee of Senate entitled the International Strategy Committee. Finally, it was proposed to extend the membership of the University Executive Board to include all members of the Academic and Professional Services Leaders group. Senate **approved** the introduction of the International Strategy Committee and the amendment to the titles of the following:

Academic Policy Committee to be renamed **Learning and Teaching Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee**

Research Policy Committee to be renamed **Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee**

Enterprise Policy Committee to be renamed **Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee**

Senate also noted the proposed amendments to the Committees of Council in order to create a new Council Advisory Committee as a forum for consideration of major policy, strategy and investment proposals before submission to Council. The proposals also formalised the role of College Management Boards within the process for consultation and decision making. Finally a number of committees including Information and Communications Technology Committee, Estates and Infrastructure Committee and Staffing Policy Committee (and their sub-Committees) would be abolished with their responsibilities redistributed among other bodies.

Senate **endorsed** the proposed changes to the delegation of powers from Council.

(d) Proposals for Departmental Realignment in the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Senate considered proposals for the merger and realignment of various academic departments within the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology, noting that these were part of the wider University move towards reducing the number of academic departments (M14 refers). Senate noted that the proposals had been subject to extensive consultation with academic and Professional Services staff, and that they were intended to better align the academic disciplines within the College to reflect the established research themes and to facilitate greater interdisciplinarity and collaboration between disciplines. It was proposed to move from five departments of Biochemistry, Biology, Cell Physiology and Pharmacology, Genetics and Psychology respectively, to three new departments entitled:

Department of Genetics

Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour

Senate **approved** the proposals for disciplinary realignment and the new departmental titles as outlined above, to be effective from 1 August 2015.

15/M21 **RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE**

Senate received a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) on the draft University Research Strategy, which had been developed to support the University Strategic Plan. The Strategy represented an institutional framework in order

to provide more emphasis upon and support for the careers of researchers and to prepare for the next REF, or equivalent, in 2020.

The document had been developed on the basis of feedback from a range of stakeholders and in light of the outcome of REF 2014. The strategy set out a series of values and actions underpinning research at the University, and also identified a set of guiding principles for preparations for the next REF exercise. The Strategy was supported by a research governance framework and there would be a REF Code of Practice which would reflect the REF guidance notes once published.

In the short term, Senate noted that preparations for the REF would commence in the 2015/16 academic year through a process of external review and early consideration of potential impact and environment statements.

Senate welcomed the development of the draft strategy, and noted that there would be further opportunities for consultation and feedback before the final strategy was agreed and presented to Senate for approval in due course.

15/M22 LEARNING AND TEACHING

(a) Draft University Learning Strategy

Senate considered a draft University Learning Strategy, which had been developed to support the University Strategic Plan. The draft document was the result of the work of a task and finish group which included representatives from the academic community, student body and the student facing services of the University.

The draft Learning Strategy comprised a statement of principles and commitments, which were linked to specific projects in order to deliver against the stated commitments. These included the development of a more flexible approach to programme delivery, supporting and resourcing a culture of innovation and further emphasising the role of the student voice within the learning experience.

Senate noted that the draft Learning Strategy would be finalised as a statement of ambitions which would then be sent out to academic and student facing departments of the University with a request that they develop shorter local statements of their commitments and projects which reflected their roles within the Strategy. This would then allow the creation of a shared understanding of ambition and action at University level which was then supported evidenced through activities at College, department and service level.

Senate welcomed the development of the draft Strategy and noted that following endorsement by Senate the document would be revised as appropriate and sent out for further consultation and response. Senate also noted that direct comments on the Strategy were also welcome from members.

Senate endorsed the draft strategy and approach above, noting that the final version would be presented for approval in due course.

(b) Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study

Senate considered proposals to amend Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study. Senate noted that the regulation was due for

review following its second year of operation, and that the review process had taken into account feedback from External Examiners and a range of internal stakeholders.

In response to the feedback the revised regulation incorporated a credit weighted average element within the scheme of assessment for all taught postgraduate programmes, and also introduced a minimum requirement at module level in order to progress and to obtain an award. The proposal also limited the amount of failed credit that would be permitted in order to students to obtain a Merit classification.

Senate noted that the proposals had been subject to detailed consultation with academic departments, and that they had also been benchmarked against standards across the sector. Senate further noted that it would be important to mitigate the potential risks associated with students not meeting the higher progression and classification requirements in certain departments through a review of curriculum and assessment design in order to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by choosing modules from outside of their immediate subject area.

Senate approved the amendments to Senate Regulation 6 for introduction for new students in the 2015/16 academic year.

(c) Academic Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee that had taken place on 26 March, 20 May and 23 June 2015.

Senate considered proposed revisions to a range of Senate Regulations, arising from amendments to processes around the monitoring of student attendance, the neglect of academic obligations, student plagiarism and following the publication of new best practice guidelines regarding the consideration of academic appeals and student complaints.

Senate considered minor amendments to Senate Regulation 2 (Admission and Registration), to reflect the implementation of the revised student attendance monitoring process, approved at its meeting in March 2015 (M6b refers). Senate also considered amendments to Senate Regulation 4 (Student Obligations) to reflect the introduction of the above mentioned policy. The proposed amendments also articulated a revised process for the consideration of neglect of academic obligations, identifying this as a student obligation as opposed to a disciplinary issue.

Senate considered amendments to Senate Regulation 10 (Academic Appeals) and Senate Regulation 12 (Student Complaints). The amendments had been designed to ensure that the University met the requirements of the Good Practice Framework recently published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, and included additional internal review processes.

Senate considered amendments to Senate Regulation 11 (Student Discipline). The proposals included the removal of neglect of academic obligations processes to Senate Regulation 4 as outlined above, and also reflected the recommendations arising from a review of the plagiarism regulations. Specifically, this more clearly articulated departmental level processes for the consideration of plagiarism and reduced the penalty for some instances of repeat plagiarism.

Senate **approved** all of the amendments to regulations for implementation in the 2015/16 academic year.

Senate noted the other business considered by the Committee. Senate noted in particular the Committee's consideration and approval of mechanisms for the development and approval of new Pathways for 2016/17 entry. Senate also noted the development and approval of University policies regarding Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption, and the Accreditation of Prior Learning.

Senate also noted the appointment of External Examiners to their various subject areas.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(d) Undergraduate degree classification profile, 2015

Senate received a report on the outcome of the midsummer examinations for undergraduate programmes within the University. Senate noted that at the time of its meeting two departments had not yet returned final results and therefore the figures presented excluded approximately 200 finalists.

Senate noted:

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
I	540	22.0%	589	22.8%	504	20.9%
2(i)	1409	57.3%	1446	56.0%	1367	56.7%
2(ii)	415	16.9%	447	18.5%	455	18.9%
3	92	3.7%	69	2.7%	86	3.55%
Pass	1	.05%	4	0.2%	1	0.05%
Aegrotat	1	.05%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	2458	100%	2585	100%	2413	100%

Percentage of Firsts/Upper Seconds:

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
70.5%	75.4%	79.3%	78.8%	77.5%

15/M23 **BUSINESS TO REPORT**

Strategy and Policy

(a) Nomination of Senate members to Council

Senate considered and **approved** the nomination of the following of its members to sit on Council.

Professor Philip Baker (Term: 1.8.2015 to 31.7.2017)

Professor Martin Barstow (Term: 1.8.2015 to 31.7.2016)

Professor Mark Peel (Term 1.8.2015 to 31.7.2017)

Professor Julie Coleman (1.8.2015 to 31.7.2017)

Dr Suzanne Macleod (Term: 1.8.2015 to 31.7.2018)

Professor Emma Raven (Term: 1.8.2015 to 31.7.2018)

Research and Enterprise

(a) Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Research Policy Committee which had taken place on 19 March, 22 April and 14 May 2015.

Senate noted in particular the work of the Committee in the development of the draft University Research Strategy (M21 refers) and the development of proposals for the establishment of Research Institutes to support themes of research excellence across the institution.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b) Enterprise Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented a report of the meeting of the Enterprise Policy Committee which had taken place on 18 June 2015.

Senate noted that the Committee's consideration of how student enterprise activities within the institution could be best developed and supported. Senate also noted the University's strong performance in the HEI Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS) in which it had risen to 23rd in 2013/14.

Senate **approved** the report.

Learning and Teaching

(a) Taught Postgraduate External Examiners' reports

Senate considered a summary of the reports from the external examiners for taught postgraduate programmes in the 2013/14 academic year. The summary had been compiled by the Academic Directors of the Colleges following a detailed review of the reports. The summary had been considered by the Academic Policy Committee and proposals for action where required had been included for the information of Senate.

Senate was pleased to note that the reports confirmed that Senate could have confidence in the standards of the University's awards and that the system of External Examiners was operating effectively. The report also demonstrated that External Examiners had identified a number of areas of excellent practice in learning and teaching, and the standard of the learning opportunities offered to students across the institution were at an appropriate level.

Senate noted that the Academic Policy Committee had approved a proposal to introduce a standard template for departmental responses to External Examiners' reports. Senate welcomed the conclusions in the report and **endorsed** the proposals for action.

(b) Career Development Advisory Board

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented a report of the meeting of the Career Development Advisory Board that had taken place on 21 May 2015.

Senate noted with pleasure that the effective implementation of the Employability Strategy had contributed to the University featuring for the first time in the top 25 institutions most targeted by employers.

Senate **approved** the report.

(c) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented a report of the meeting of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee which had taken place on 11 May 2015.

Senate noted the Committee's consideration of the outcome of the Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey (PRES), which demonstrated that the University's research students continued to be extremely positive about the quality of their overall experience.

Senate **approved** the report.

(d) Programmes of Study

Senate received a list of programmes of study recently approved or withdrawn.

Committees of Senate

(a) Information and Communications Technology Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Science and Engineering presented reports of the meetings of the Information and Communications Technology Committee that had taken place on 30 April and 11 June 2015.

Senate noted the Committee's development of proposals relating to the Digital Campus and a policy on the selection and use of cloud devices. Senate also noted that a new IT Strategy would be developed to support the implementation of the University Strategic Plan in the Autumn term.

Senate **approved** the report.

(b) Senate Student Disciplinary Committee

Senate received the outcome of two recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

15/M24

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Senate noted the dates of its meetings in the 2015/16 academic year as follows:

Wednesday 11 November 2015, 2pm

Wednesday 9 March 2016, 2pm

Wednesday 29 June 2016, 2pm

15/M25 **THANKS**

Senate wished to record its thanks to Professor King, outgoing Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Science for his contribution to the development of the College and of the University.